



Farmington River Watershed Association, Inc.

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February 20, 2013

TESTIMONY ON SB 814

Dear Senator Cassano, Representative Rojas, and members of the Committee on Planning and Development,

On behalf of the Farmington River Watershed Association, I am submitting this testimony to **oppose** **SB814, An Act Concerning Intervention in Permit Proceedings Pursuant to the Environmental Protection Act of 1971.**

If passed, this legislation would impose requirements that are specific to environmental intervenors, putting them at a disadvantage relative to other intervenors and thus quelling full public comment. The Act seems based on an assumption that there is a need to correct abuses of the CEPA process by those who oppose permits on environmental grounds. But abuse of the process with frivolous litigation is practiced by other types of intervenors. In targeting just one class of intervenors, the Act is unjust.

The Connecticut Environmental Protection Act of 1971 (CEPA) provides recourse to the public when they see the need to challenge decisions that allow unreasonable pollution and environmental degradation, and would harm the public interest or a public good. Overall CEPA has been an enormously positive influence in preserving the quality of life in Connecticut and in helping protect the cleanliness and safety of our air, water, and open space. While a solution may be needed to deal with frivolous opposition to permits via CEPA, targeting one group for special requirements is not legitimate. Any Act to address this problem must be applied even-handedly to all potential intervenors, or be revealed as a badly disguised attempt to disenfranchise a whole category of intervenors, regardless of whether they have ever engaged in an abusive or frivolous intervention. Furthermore, it specifically weakens the very type of intervenor that the CEPA process should empower: those who comment on the environmental impact of a permitted activity. The Farmington River Watershed Association has conducted itself fairly and responsibly whenever it has had intervenor status. We feel directly and unfairly targeted by this legislation. It would undermine our right and ability to participate as equals in public debate, on issues important to all citizens, and therefore we strongly oppose it.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Eileen Fielding". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Eileen Fielding
Executive Director